



MORPETH RURAL DISTRICT

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

AND PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

1972

MORPETH RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

A N N U A L R E P O R T
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
AND
CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR
1972

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH1972To the Chairman and Members of the Morpeth Rural District Council

As this will be the final report to you, and in 1974 medical officers of health will end a long association with local government, it seems appropriate and of interest to recollect the changes which have taken place over the years. When one does look back one is left with an impression of how fast time passes and change takes place and yet also how slowly.

The oldest available report by a medical officer of health in this area is that for Alnwick in 1902. No doubt it was representative of the circumstances existing in North Northumberland at that time and it is largely reprinted in the following pages. All those who are seventy-years-old, and there are many, were born into the conditions depicted in the report and they either experienced them or, as was the habit then, were protected from them in what is now referred to as the "golden" Edwardian era. Public health was very much involved with drains and infectious disease. There were lodging houses for tramps and overcrowding - how often does one see a tramp let alone a female tramp in Northumberland in 1972. There was the belief that infectious diseases were largely spread from blocked drains as much as by personal contact. Scavenging had just been undertaken by the local authority and there was a recent Act to control people's conditions of work.

In the centre of the town there were stables, byres and middens with liquid manure seeping into houses. The open offal cart wended its way through unpaved streets. Drinking water was often coloured and had to be turned off on many nights. Water-borne sewage had only settling tanks for treatment while in the rural areas especially earth closets were the rule and not the exception.

There was an infectious disease hospital with uncovered access to toilets, inadequate hot water supply and no means of disinfection. Presumably the female tramp with smallpox was admitted there.

There is an unconscious humour in the report. The opening address of "Gentlemen" could not possibly envisage women members serving on the Council. There is the suggestion that the Councillors would be more relieved to be spared the cost of a smallpox outbreak than they would be to escape an epidemic. There was the assumption, as was commonly believed, that small boys would suffer psychological damage as a result of seeing unpleasant sights in the slaughterhouse and, also, that the town's morals would deteriorate if the water supply was cut off.

Both the birth and infant mortality rates were high and 21 infants out of 174 live births died before they were one year old. Only two out of every five people lived until they were sixty. There were 18 deaths from tuberculosis and these occurred in people aged as young as 25 years. The incidence in 1902 of other killing infectious diseases such as smallpox and diphtheria was probably low compared with other years.

A public mortuary was needed both because dead bodies presumably unclaimed were found lying in the streets and because there was no alternative but to keep decomposing deceased relatives in overcrowded bedrooms.

Many houses had standpipes for water and gullies for slops. Yards and streets were largely unpaved. The milk supply, a common source of infection, was untreated and badly stored.

In the midst of these conditions it was only possible to find one house which was unfit for habitation. One wonders what it was like.

It is of interest to compare events and conditions in Alnwick in 1902 with a population of about 6,000 with those in rural North Northumberland in 1972 which had a population of 85,000 (the ten authorities from Morpeth west to Rothbury and north to Berwick).

In these ten authorities in 1972 there were two deaths from tuberculosis; one person aged 71 years and the other a recent immigrant from abroad. There were only nine new cases mainly in older people.

Only nineteen deaths of infants under one year occurred in nearly one thousand births and half of these were the result of congenital abnormalities incompatible with life. There was one death each from food poisoning and meningitis but these were unusual occurrences. Diphtheria, typhoid, smallpox and poliomyelitis were mainly risks through importation from abroad.

Most of the area had mains water supply apart from outlying farms and small villages. Sewage treatment had only been provided in many areas in recent years but the remaining centres of population had schemes under construction or consideration.

In the ten years 1962/71 the population fell by 4,000. Nine hundred and twenty unfit houses were demolished but 4,280 new houses were built which meant that fewer people were living in more and better housing.

Of the deaths in 1972 only one quarter occurred in persons who were under sixty five years of age.

In 1972 lodging houses and infectious diseases hospitals were no longer local necessities; housing had improved almost beyond recognition; there was a mortuary in Alnwick; slaughterhouses, food hygiene and milk production were controlled by legislation; there was good refuse collection and disposal; there was control of conditions of work; in general currently acceptable standards for living conditions were no longer comparable with 1902.

If those involved with environmental conditions in 1902 were to have returned seventy years later they could have been excused for thinking that, in the lifetime of the babies born in their year, most of what they had set out to do had been achieved.

Extracts from the Report of the Medical Officer of Health
in Alnwick for 1902 are printed in the following pages.

To the Chairman and other Members of the
Alnwick Urban District Council

1902

GENTLEMEN,

The weather during the year 1902 has been throughout cold and wet, and favourable to the development of pulmonary disease and rheumatism. The absence of warm weather has lessened the prevalence of diarrhoea so common in the summer time... It is a matter of congratulation that the town has not had to cope with an epidemic of Smallpox, and its accompanying expenses.

WATER SUPPLY

The small rainfall has caused the water supply to be short on several occasions, and it was found necessary to shut it off for 98 nights. Pumping has had to be again resorted to on 62 days.

I cannot do better than preface my remarks about water supply than by quoting an extract from a standard work on Public Health. "Of all vital requisites water is the most essential. It has decided in large measure the distribution of man over the globe, and at the present day in sanitary matters its consideration takes precedence over all other questions. A wholesome and liberal supply of water is essential to every community, not only for alimental use, but for purposes of personal and general cleanliness, trade and manufacture, and safety against fire. Deficiency of water is invariably followed by ill-health, and a lowering of the moral standard".

Danger of Intermittent Supply. - Should any escape of foul gas occur near the hydrants there is the danger of its being sucked into the mains and so polluting the supply. There is another and greater danger to be contended against, viz., the street hydrants become full of filth which is washed into them from time to time... thus finding its way into the pipes, and finally into domestic supplies. If this happened at only one point it is quite enough to render useless the care that is taken in collecting and purifying water. How much more must this apply when nearly all the hydrants are affected... After wet weather the supply is coloured... This colouration evidently comes from the shallower springs; as it is from two to three days after a heavy rain that we begin to feel the benefit of an increased supply, combined with the turbid condition which leads many people to think that they are drinking Rugley Burn.

SEWAGE

The Canongate Sewage system is at present occupying the attention of the Council, and also the treatment of the combined sewage at the Main Sewage Works. It is at present proposed to slightly modify these, to make them into open septic tanks, and then treat the combined effluent by Aerobic Filters.

SCAVENGING

Since the Council has taken the scavenging into its own hands there has been a marked improvement in the cleanliness of the town. This must have a beneficial effect upon the Public Health. It is, however, very difficult to deal with some districts, as places that are cleaned in the morning become as bad as ever before night owing to the careless and filthy habits of certain portions of the community.

DISPOSAL OF SLOPS

The careless method of disposal of slops in some of the crowded parts of the town has given rise to many nuisances in the past, due to the absorption of putrescible matter into the soil surrounding the sinks, and its subsequent decomposition in warm weather. In view of this, I reported to the Council in May as to the benefit that would accrue from cementing the surface round the sinks for a distance of two or three feet. I find from the Inspector's report that many have been done.

/cont.....

PAVING OF YARDS

A great number of the yards and lanes are at present either unpaved or at best only paved with cobble stones. In some of these there are dwelling houses mixed up with stables, cowsheds and their attendant middens; the consequence being that the rain and liquid manure penetrate into the soil and foundations of the houses, and render them damp and unhealthy.

HOUSE ACCOMMODATION

The house accommodation for the Working Classes still leaves much to be desired. The erection of workmen's dwellings behind Clayport is slowly progressing, and it is to be hoped will be finished during the coming season. Many more houses are required in the town before overcrowding can be thoroughly dealt with.

LODGING HOUSES

The erection of two Lodging Houses, one of which is registered, and the other I expect, will be by the time this report is read, will relieve the town of a good deal of responsibility, and enable the authorities to do away with the unlicensed Lodging Houses, and to deal with the worst cases of overcrowding that may occur.

HOUSES CLOSED

A house in the Angel Inn Yard has been condemned as unfit for habitation, and also a room in the Crown Inn Yard. Both have been closed.

HOUSES BUILT

Only about seven new houses have been built during the past year, or are in course of erection... The widening of the footpath on Bondgate Hill, and the making of a cart track hardly come under the heading of sanitary improvements, though undoubtedly of great benefit to the town.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES

The Slaughter Houses have been inspected from time to time, and certain improvements would be beneficial. The necessity of cleanliness has been impressed upon the tenants, and I am glad to say that a great step has been made in this direction although there is still room for improvement. The number of boys who hang about the slaughter houses are a great annoyance to the tenants, to say nothing of the bad effect such sights must have upon them.

DAIRIES AND COWSHEDS

The attention of the Council is specially directed to the Dairies and Cowsheds. In many cases cows are kept in unsuitable places, the air-space required being in nearly every case insufficient, and the provision for the storage of milk are of a most meagre description.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACT

This Act which came into force at the beginning of the year, enables the Council to deal with workshops and work places which have not sufficient air-space, nor necessary accommodation for employees; and which are not kept in such a state of cleanliness as may be necessary.

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BAKEHOUSES

The bakehouses have received special attention, and were found clean; and with the exception of one, in accordance with the Act, which provides that on and after Jan. 1st, 1904, no underground bakehouse is to be permitted unless special provision for ventilation and lighting be made.

INFECTIOUS HOSPITAL

The Infectious Hospital requires certain alterations and improvements in view of the climate in which we live. The present open way from the wards to the Nurses' room and w.c.'s should be closed in, provision made for an adequate supply of hot water, and an efficient disinfecting apparatus provided.

PHTHISIS

In November I reported to the Council as to the infectious nature of Phthisis, and the Council gave their consent for the Inspector of Nuisances to disinfect any room where a death from that disease had occurred. My medical colleagues in the town have promised to give all assistance in their power in the voluntary notification of such cases.

MORTUARY

Perhaps I might here mention the need there is in Alnwick of a properly constructed Public Mortuary, not only for the disposal of any dead body that may be found and await a Coroner's Inquest, but also for the reception of the dead before interment. There are many families living in one or two rooms among whom the practice of keeping a dead body in the house for a considerable time before burial is the rule and not the exception. I may point out that there is a certain danger to Public Health in retaining a corpse in a crowded house until putrefaction commences. This danger becomes more apparent when the death happens to have taken place from an infectious disease. I am quite aware of the prejudices, and opposition, there would be to the removal of the dead from the home to the mortuary on the part of the very class of people who would benefit most by such an establishment, but still I consider it my duty in the interest of public health to mention the need there is for some provision of this kind.

DEATHS

During the year there have been 113 deaths, 19 of which occurred in the public institutions in the town. Of these, 44 were over the age of 60 and 21 under 1 year of age.

DEATH RATE

The annual death-rate is 16.82 per 1000. Although the death rate is higher than last year it is 3.3 below the average of the last ten years.

The causes of death as tabulated are as follows:-

Diarrhoea	.. 1	Diseases and Accidents)	
Phthisis	.. 10	of Parturition)	.. 1
Tubercular Diseases	.. 8	Heart Disease	.. 13
Cancer	.. 9	Accidents	.. 5
Bronchitis	.. 9	Brain Diseases	.. 6
Pneumonia	.. 9	Urinary System	.. 8
Alcoholism	.. 2	Digestive System	.. 11
Premature Birth	.. 1	All other causes	.. 20
		Total	113

/contd.....

All the deaths from Phthisis occurred in persons between the ages of 25 and 60. The Phthisis death-rate compares favourably with that of last year... The number of deaths of children under the age of 1 year (21) is higher than last year, but still 3.7 below the average of the last ten years.

BIRTHS

registered during the year numbered 174 - 81 males and 93 females, giving a birth-rate of 25.9 per 1000. The birth-rate is below the average of the last 10 years, the average rate being 27.6.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE

There have been during the year 22 cases of Infectious Disease notified, as follows:-

Smallpox	1	Erysipelas	3
Diphtheria	1	Scarlet Fever	17

none of these fortunately ended fatally.

The case of Smallpox was of a modified type, and occurred in a tramp admitted to the Workhouse. It fortunately did not spread, although we had reason to believe that the woman had been into the town before admission to the House. No cause could be assigned for the case of Diphtheria, but as one or two other cases had previously occurred in the immediate neighbourhood, attention was directed to the gully traps in the street... In most cases of Scarlatina not traceable to outside infection the drains have been examined, and in several cases have been found to be at fault.

The Inspector of Nuisances in 1902 reports under the following headings:-

Total number of nuisances abated
 Number of water closets repaired
 Number limewashed, cleansed
 New syphonic cisterns in place of old ones
 Pan closets taken out and replaced by pedestals
 Drains opened and cleansed from obstruction
 Drains relaid, repaired or otherwise improved
 Drains trapped by gully traps
 Drains flushed with hosepipe
 Drains smoke tested
 Rooms disinfected after cases of infectious disease
 Miscellaneous nuisances arising from various causes

ANNUAL REPORT - 1972

Vital Statistics The mid-year estimated population in the District was 16,820 persons which was an increase of seventy over the population enumerated at the Census in 1971. This presumes a small inward migration because there were twenty eight more deaths than births during the year.

There was a total of 179 births and of these 99 were male and 80 female. The crude birth rate was 10.6 births per thousand population, the comparability factor was 1.14, and the adjusted birth rate 12.1 per thousand. This was the lowest birth rate in the available records and the number of births fell by over 20% when compared with the previous year. (The birth rate for England and Wales was 14.8 per thousand in 1972). There has been a marked decline in the number of births since 1964 and for some years prior to that the number of births were of the order of 300 annually.

During the year there were 207 deaths - ten more than in 1971. For the first year in the available records the number of deaths exceeded the number of births. Forty per cent of deaths occurred in persons aged 75 years or older and 66 per cent occurred in persons aged 65 years or older. Causes of death were mainly in the expected categories and those due to cancer and vascular diseases were in the same proportion as in the country as a whole. There were ten accidental deaths from a wide range of causes and spread over a wide range of ages. Two deaths were due to motor vehicle accidents. There were four deaths of infants under one year of age - two of these were due to congenital abnormalities and one due to meningococcal meningitis. The infant mortality rate was 22 per thousand live births and this was above the national rate (17 per thousand).

Immunisation The table attached shows the number of children given primary courses of immunisation. The numbers for diphtheria, whooping cough and tetanus show a small increase compared with 1971; those for measles and poliomyelitis a sizeable increase; and those for rubella vaccination of

adolescent girls a considerable fall. However, the number of children vaccinated against measles is not as high as for other forms of immunisation which partly explains the considerable number of cases during the year.

Infectious Diseases Notified cases of infectious diseases are nowadays often few in number. However, during the year there were 76 cases of measles notified and the preventability of this disease has been commented on.

There were three isolated cases of infection by food poisoning organisms. One case occurred in a young girl who lived on a farm where the same salmonella infection had been responsible for the death of some calves. Both her parents were also infected but developed no symptoms. In the other two cases no source of infection could be identified. The three organisms involved were salmonella typhimurium, stanley and agona. Salmonella infections were also reported on eight occasions in farm livestock, seven bovine infections and one avian, but there were no associated human cases apart from the one mentioned above.

Dysentery was reported in sixteen cases in the early months of the year - 10 children and 6 adults. Eight children attended two schools in the same village but a large outbreak did not occur.

Information was received about one case of brucellosis in an adult male who was a farmer. Association with cattle rather than the milk supply appeared to be the likely source of infection.

An infant developed acute meningococcal meningitis and this ended fatally. Throat swabs from the remainder of the family proved negative.

One case of pulmonary tuberculosis was notified posthumously in an elderly man. There were no associated cases. No other new cases were notified during the year.

Ian G.P. Fraser

Medical Officer of Health

GENERAL STATISTICS

The area of the district was 79,195 acres

The number of inhabited houses was 5,895
and the number of new houses completed
during the year was 82.

The estimated mid-year population was
16,820, this figure was taken when
calculating the birth and death rate.

VITAL STATISTICSLive Births

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate	90	76	166
Illegitimate	9	4	13
Totals	<u>99</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>179</u>

Crude Birth Rate per 1,000 of the population	10.6
Crude Birth Rate multiplied by Comparability Factor (1.14)	12.1
Illegitimate births per cent of total live births	7

Stillbirths

Legitimate	-	1	1
Illegitimate	-	-	-
Totals	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

Stillbirth Rate per 1,000 total live and still births	6
Total Live and Still Births	180

Infant Deaths (Deaths under one year)

Legitimate	2	1	3
Illegitimate	-	1	1
Totals	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>

Infant Mortality Rates

Total infant deaths per 1,000 total live births	22
Legitimate infant deaths per 1,000 legitimate live births	18
Illegitimate infant deaths per 1,000 illegitimate live births	77

Neo-natal Mortality Rate

Deaths under four weeks per 1,000 total live births	17
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Early Neo-natal Mortality Rate

Deaths under one week per 1,000 total live births	11
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Perinatal Mortality Rate

Stillbirths and deaths under one week combined 17
per 1,000 total live and still births

Maternal Mortality (including abortion)

Number of deaths -
Rate per 1,000 total live and still births -

<u>Deaths</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
	121	86	207

Crude Death Rate per 1,000 population 12.3
Crude Death Rate multiplied by Comparability Factor (1.09) 13.4

CAUSES OF DEATH

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Meningococcal Infection	1	-	1
Malignant Neoplasm - Buccal Cavity etc.	-	1	1
" " - Stomach	4	2	6
" " - Intestine	1	5	6
" " - Lung, Bronchus	8	-	8
" " - Breast	-	5	5
" " - Uterus	-	2	2
" " - Prostate	3	-	3
Leukaemia	1	-	1
Other Malignant Neoplasms	5	6	11
Diabetes Mellitus	1	1	2
Other Endocrine etc. Diseases	2	-	2
Mental Disorders	-	2	2
Other Diseases of Nervous System	2	-	2
Chronic Rheumatic Heart Disease	1	1	2
Hypertensive Disease	1	1	2
Ischaemic Heart Disease	34	26	60
Other Forms of Heart Disease	6	3	9
Cerebrovascular Disease	20	13	33
Other Diseases of Circulatory System	6	3	9
Pneumonia	1	5	6
Bronchitis and Emphysema	10	-	10
Other Diseases of Respiratory System	1	-	1
Peptic Ulcer	3	1	4
Nephritis and Nephrosis	1	1	2
Diseases of the Musculo-Skeletal System	-	2	2
Congenital Anomalies	2	1	3
Motor Vehicle Accidents	1	1	2
All Other Accidents	6	2	8
Suicide and Self-Inflicted Injuries	-	2	2
	<u>121</u>	<u>86</u>	<u>207</u>

INFANT MORTALITY1940 - 1972

Year	Population	Crude Birth Rate	Crude Death Rate	Infant Mortality Rate
1940	16,580	14	10	71
1945	15,550	18	10	56
1950	17,650	17	9	40
1955	17,860	15	11	26
1960	17,860	16	10	52
1961	17,120	16	10	15
1962	17,510	17	9	17
1963	17,570	16	12	39
1964	17,840	17	11	13
1965	17,950	15	11	7
1966	17,940	13	11	26
1967	17,910	14	9	8
1968	17,400	14	11	16
1969	17,050	13	10	22
1970	16,590	13	11	19
1971	16,750	14	12	18
1972	16,820	11	12	22

NOTIFICATIONS OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Measles	76
Meningitis	1
Scarlet Fever	2
Dysentery	16
Tuberculosis	1
Food Poisoning	3

TUBERCULOSIS

One case of pulmonary tuberculosis was notified during the year in a man aged 74 years. No associated cases were discovered as a result of investigation of contacts. The case was notified post-mortem.

IMMUNISATION

The table below shows the age-groups of children given primary immunising courses in the Central Area during 1972 - this covers the four authorities Morpeth Borough, Morpeth R.D.C., Ashington, Newbiggin.

Form of Immunisation	Year of Birth					Others Under 16 Years	Total
	1972	1971	1970	1969	1965/68		
Diphtheria	8	644	94	7	24	5	782
Whooping Cough	7	642	89	7	20	5	770
Tetanus	8	643	94	7	24	56	832
Poliomyelitis	8	637	92	8	21	16	782
Measles	2	364	225	38	60	2	691
Rubella	-	-	-	-	-	599	599

B.C.G. Vaccination against Tuberculosis

Morpeth Borough	531
Morpeth R.D.	10

Annual Report of the Public Health InspectorWATER SUPPLIES

The statutory undertakers for the supply of water to the rural district is the Tynemouth County Borough Council and ninety seven per cent (97%) of dwellings within the district are provided with piped water from this authority.

The water is of good quality, adequate in quantity, and maintained to a high standard. It is described as being:- "Moderate hard with a natural fluoride content varying from 0.1 to 0.2 parts per million and a lead solvency of 0.2 parts per million".

The supply is chlorinated and regularly tested by the undertakers, and in addition, the department collected 64 routine samples throughout the district which were sent to the Public Health Laboratory for examination. One sample only returned a poor result and check samples taken in that locality one week later were found to be up to standard.

The remaining three per cent (3%) of the dwellings within the district obtain water from private sources, i.e. shallow wells, springs and boreholes etc. Generally speaking, these supplies are adequate in quantity, but tend to vary in quality, hence the need for regular routine sampling.

Throughout the year a total of 71 samples of water from 41 private sources were collected and sent for bacteriological examination.

Thirty-two private sources thus examined returned satisfactory results and required no further action from the department, the remaining 9 sources were below standard in varying degrees and entailed investigation and advice to effect improvement which was then checked by repeat sampling.

All samples collected are bacteriologically examined by the Public Health Laboratory Service at Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The following table shows the respective parishes of the district and indicates the numbers of dwellings together with the estimated populations in each, receiving water from public and private sources.

WATER SUPPLIES 1972
1ST JANUARY TO 31ST DECEMBER

PARISH	TOTAL NO. OF HOUSES	MAINS SUPPLY		PRIVATE SUPPLY	
		HOUSES	EST. POP.	HOUSES	EST. POP.
Cresswell	70	70	212	NIL	-
East Chevington	1272	1272	2842	NIL	-
Ellington	470	470	1350	NIL	-
Hartburn	69	65	198	4	10
Hebron	119	87	272	32	90
Longhirst	148	148	'08	NIL	-
Hepscott	172	171	521	1	2
Longhorsley	203	176	500	27	76
Lynemouth	829	829	2517	NIL	-
Meldon	76	75	227	1	3
Mitford	130	119	344	11	28
Netherwitton	88	57	175	31	80
Pegswood	892	892	2715	NIL	-
Thirston	155	113	342	42	127
Tritlington	71	48	145	23	59
Ulgham	958	958	2868	NIL	-
Wallington	144	134	391	10	29
West Chevington	32	32	99	NIL	-
Widdrington	61	61	183	NIL	-
	5959	5777	16309	182	504

Five of the dwellings listed, (estimated population 10), still lack an internal piped water supply. Two of these are supplied by standpipes from the public main supply and the remainder by standpipes from private sources.

Additionally, a large hospital in the rural district with some 760 inmates, draws approximately two thirds of its water requirements from its own private supply. This supply is regularly checked and found to be of good quality.

The remaining water requirement is obtained from the public mains supply and, should their own source fail for any reason, the whole demand of the Hospital (some 15 million gallons annually) can be met from the public supply.

SEWERAGE

The stage 1 development, (estimated cost £75,000) for improvement of the sewerage and sewage disposal system for Ellington and Lynemouth villages was commenced and substantially completed during the year.

Stage 11 of this development, (estimate cost £850,000) was submitted and approved by the Department of the Environment but no further progress was made in the year.

A scheme for extension of the sewage disposal works at Longhorsley Village (estimated cost £100,000) was prepared and submitted to the Department of the Environment and was still awaiting approval at the end of the year.

The possibility of providing sewage disposal works at East Chevington was to be investigated following complaints of contamination of the beach with sewage at Druridge.

DRAINAGE AND CONVERSION

No applications for grant under Section 47, Public Health Act 1936 towards the cost of converting conservancy type sanitary accommodation to water carriage systems were received during the year.

Most works of this nature continued to be executed as part of general improvements with "standard" or "discretionary" grants under the provisions of the Housing Acts, 1949/69, and six water closets together with other amenities were thus provided.

At the end of the year it was estimated that fourteen conservancy type closets, serving approximately 0.23% of the districts dwellings stock, continue to be used.

Every effort continues to be made for their elimination.

SEPTIC TANK EMPTYING SERVICE

Brought into operation in May 1965, to cater for the sewage disposal system of private dwellings unable for various reasons to be connected to the public sewers, this essential service was continued and during the year 410 tanks serving 650 dwellings were emptied.

The original 1,000 gallon vacuum tanker was replaced with a new vehicle of similar tank capacity in April and by the end of the year it had travelled 5,100 miles on the performance of its various functions.

In addition to the annual free service to domestic premises, the vehicle was engaged on other rechargeable works and time spent by the operator on these services was as follows:-

	<u>Percentage</u>
Free service, (including holidays, sickness and vehicle repairs and maintenance etc.)	70.9
Rechargeable works and sewerage	29.1
<u>Cost of Service</u>	
Expenditure	£3128. 26
Income	£1445. 95
Nett Charge to District	<u>£1683. 31</u>

PUBLIC CLEANSING

The refuse collection service was satisfactorily maintained throughout the nineteen parishes of the rural district during the year without any disruption from labour, weather or mechanical breakdown.

Demand for removal and disposal of bulky household discards continued to increase with corresponding increase in service costs as most of these articles have to be dealt with outside of normal collection schedules.

Despite the very good collection service provided, indiscriminate dumping on roadside verges and woodland areas of the district, of garden, household and other rubbish continued unabated and would appear to be a situation impossible to combat by punitive action because of the surreptitious methods adopted by these vandals.

COLLECTION VEHICLES

The five vehicles in use are all of specialist manufacture by the firm of Shelvoke and Drewry Ltd, and with one exception, are all of the compacting type as set out under:-

<u>Reg. No. and Date</u>		<u>Type of Vehicle</u>
WNL 141	1962	16/18 cu. yd. Fore and Aft tipping type
CJR 624 B	1964	50 cu. yd Pakamatic Compactor
HNL 654 D	1966	35 cu. yd " "
RNL 629 G	1969	35 cu. yd " "
ATY 603 K	1971	50 cu. yd Revopak

REFUSE DISPOSAL

For economic reasons, collected refuse continues to be disposed of by dumping on to sites as near as possible to sources of production and existing disposal sites at East Chevington, Causey Park, Lynemouth and Pegswood, continued to be used and maintained to the best possible standards within the limits imposed by plant and labour availability.

One man operating a tractor with hydraulically operated shovel is employed full time on management of the several disposal sites.

In September use of the site at Lynemouth was discontinued because of its unsatisfactory situation and difficulty of control and at the end of the year similar action was taken at East Chevington. This action was only possible by the grant of permission from the National Coal Board Opencast Executive to dump household refuse into their workings at Hadston and Widdrington.

Two unsatisfactory sites were thus eliminated and it is anticipated that all refuse from the more populated eastern site of the district will continue to be absorbed in the opencast workings for many months into the future.

Informal action under the provisions of section 75, Public Health Act, 1936 resulted in the provision and/or renewal of 91 standard dustbins. In addition 74 dustbins were renewed to Council owned dwellings and 75 were supplied to private persons.

Visits for purposes of complaints, investigation and supervision of plant and personnel etc. were made on 342 occasions.

Service costs and statistics

Distance covered by vehicles	32,716 miles
Estimated weight of refuse handled	10,217 tons
Average weight of refuse per dwelling	1.72 tons
NETT COST OF SERVICE	£35,044. 44
Cost per ton handled	£3. 43
Cost per dwelling per annum	£5. 88
Cost per head of population	£2. 084
Cost to the rates in the £	0. 073p

Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960, Caravan Sites Act 1968

The popularity of holiday caravanning continued unabated and visits to the several sites within the district were made on 85 occasions.

There are four principal sites in the rural district all of which are within two miles of the coast. These are situated, two in Cresswell parish (catering for 440 caravans), one in Ellington parish (45 caravans) and one in West Chevington parish (70 caravans).

All sites are provided with amenities up to the standard recommended by the Act and with one exception, the privately owned site at Cresswell, all are full to capacity.

This latter site is undergoing further development and will eventually cater for some 300 caravans.

The demand for residential sites within the district, never great, followed the usual pattern and, where an individual applicant received a planning permission to his proposal, usually restricted to limited periods, a licence was issued under the provisions of section 269, Public Health Act, 1936 to cover the period of permission granted. At the end of the year two caravans only were occupied residentially.

The following table indicates the position with regard to caravans in the rural district at the end of the year.

	<u>Holiday</u>		<u>Residential</u>	
	No. of Sites	No. of Caravans	No. of Sites	No of Caravans
Council owned and controlled	1	260	-	-
Licenced (existing)	4	297	-	-
" (not developed)	1	100	-	-
" (renewed)	8	11	1	1
" (new)	-	-	1	1

Gypsies have never posed a serious problem in this district although the more rural parts have on occasion been occupied by itinerant families for short periods whilst the possibilities of the area were explored. Consequently there has never been a need to give consideration to the provision of a site for such families as required under the provisions of the Caravan Sites Act, 1968.

Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, 1949

Under the provisions of this act, a full time operative is employed to fulfil the Council's obligation to ensure that their district is relatively free from vermin infestation and for this purpose regular surveys were made of all surface properties.

In addition, bi-annual test baiting of all sewerage systems in the district was undertaken.

Householders are provided with free servicing where infestation occurred and agricultural and other business premises were dealt with on a time and materials basis as requested.

No enforcement action for eradication of vermin was found necessary.

The importance of proofing against infestation continued to be stressed and circulars indicating those points in properties requiring special attention, are freely available.

Assistance was also provided for eradication of wasps, cockroaches, pipistrel bats and in one case on Council property, an infestation of moles.

The following table is a copy of the Annual Return made to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, on the rodent control work of the department during the year.

	<u>Type of Property</u>	
	<u>Non Agricultural</u>	<u>Agricultural</u>
1. No. of properties in district	5959	612
2. (a) Total number of properties (including nearby premises) inspected following notification	168	74
(b) Number infested by		
(i) Rats	108	48
(ii) Mice	40	20
3. (a) Total number of properties inspected for rats and/or mice for reasons other than notification	246	63
(b) Number infested by		
(i) Rats	145	22
(ii) Mice	24	6

Sewers No evidence of infestation of any system.

Tabular Statement of Housing for the year 1972

Number of houses completed during the year

(a) By Local Authority	10
(b) By any other Housing Authority	NIL
(c) By private persons	72

Closing and Demolition

(1) Houses demolished in Clearance Areas	NIL
(2) Houses demolished not in Clearance Areas	NIL
(3) Houses closed, not demolished	NIL
(4) Any other houses permanently discontinued as dwellings and not included above	3

Repairs

Houses made fit

(5) By informal action	85
(6) By owners following statutory action	NIL
(7) By Local Authority in default of owner	NIL
(8) Demolition Orders revoked after reconstruction	NIL

The following information was supplied to the Department of the Environment as requested in Annex A to circular 50/72

	<u>No. of Dwellings</u>	
	owned by Local Authority	other ownership
<u>Estimates of Condition of Housing</u>		
<u>Stock in mid 1972</u>		
<u>Unfit Dwellings</u>		
(1) In areas already declared under Part III Housing Act 1957	NIL	95
(2) In other areas to be declared under Part III Housing Act 1957	NIL	8
(3) Not in Part III Areas	<u>NIL</u>	<u>1</u>
(4) Total of unfit dwellings (Items 1 plus 2 plus 3)	NIL	104
<u>Dwellings not unfit</u>		
(5) Up to 12 point standard	1146	850
(6) Capable of improvement to 12 point standard	719	2764
(7) Not capable of improvement to 12 point standard	<u>NIL</u>	<u>312</u>
<u>Total of dwellings in the area</u>		
(Items 4 plus 5 plus 6 plus 7)	1865	4030

Housing Acts 1969 - 71

	<u>No. of Areas</u>	<u>No. of Houses</u>
<u>A. General Improvement Areas</u>		
Areas declared during the year	NIL	NIL
<u>B. Privately owned house improvement</u>		
	<u>No. of Separate Houses</u>	
	<u>In G.I.As.</u>	<u>Others</u>
<u>1. Discretionary Grants</u>		
(a) Applications submitted during year	NIL	198
(b) Improvements completed by end of year	NIL	70
(c) Approximate average grant per house of (b)	£1,000	
(d) Total number of houses improved with grant aid since 1949	913	

2. Standard Grants

	<u>During the year</u>	<u>Total to date</u>
(a) Number of separate houses for which grants have been made	6	118
(b) Number of houses so provided with		
(i) Bath or shower	2	82
(ii) Wash hand basins	2	84
(iii) Hot water supply	NIL	70
(iv) Water Closet	6	108
(v) Sink	NIL	55
(c) Council House Improvements		
No. of Council owned properties improved with exchequer assistance	16	16

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

MILK SUPPLY

Licensing and use of the special designations, "Untreated", "Pasteurised" and "Sterilized", are under the control of the Northumberland County Council as the Food and Drugs Authority and Milk Sampling within the district is undertaken by the County Health Inspector.

Thirteen samples were collected by this officer during the year from premises or retailers within the rural district as follows:-

Distributors within the Rural District

Pasteurised milk	4
Untreated milk	1

Distributors outside of the Rural District

Pasteurised milk	6
Untreated milk	2

With two exceptions the samples satisfied the prescribed tests. The exceptions were both of pasteurised milk which failed to satisfy the methylene blue test.

Brucellosis

As the scheme for brucellosis-free herds increased in momentum and covered most of the herds in the rural district, participation in the collection of samples for the purposes of screen testing by the local authority was considered to be an unnecessary duplication of duties and was therefore discontinued.

One sample only was collected early in the year and the result returned was:- *Brucella-abortus* negative.

Food Premises

There are a total of 108 food premises within the district and by type of business the number is made up as follows:-

Grocers and General Dealers	48
School Kitchens and Dining Rooms	14
Public Houses	12
Licensed Clubs	11
Butchers	3
Industrial Canteens	4
Fried Fish Shops	2
Hospitals and Institutions	2
Cafes	7
Bakers	2
Chemists	2
Slaughterhouses	1

Of these premises, 34 are registered under the requirements of Section 16, Food and Drugs Act, 1955 as listed under:-

Sale of Ice Cream	29
Manufacture and Sale of Ice Cream	2
Manufacture of Sausages and Preserved Meats	3

Visits to food premises were made on 260 occasions and a satisfactory standard of hygiene was maintained.

Meats and Other Foods

The small privately owned licensed slaughterhouse at Lynemouth continued to be used for the slaughter and dressing of sheep and pigs only.

The premises are improved to the standard required by the Slaughterhouses (Hygiene) Regulations 1958 and were well maintained.

All animals slaughtered were inspected in accordance with the Meat Inspection Regulations 1963.

Details of Animals Slaughtered and Examined.

	Cattle Excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep	Pigs
No Killed	NIL	NIL	NIL	598	206
No Examined	NIL	NIL	NIL	598	206
<u>All Diseases Except Tuberculosis or Cysticerci</u>					
Whole Carcases				NIL	NIL
Part Carcases				1	6
Percentages				0.17	2.91
<u>Tuberculosis Only</u>	NOT APPLICABLE				
Whole Carcases				NIL	NIL
Part Carcases				NIL	NIL
Percentages				NIL	NIL
<u>Cysticerci Only</u>					
Whole Carcases				NIL	NIL
Part Carcases				NIL	NIL
Percentages				NIL	NIL

The following articles of food examined on retail and other premises and found to be unfit for human consumption for various reasons, were surrendered to and disposed of by the staff of the health department:-

Tinned Milk	15 pints
Tinned Meats	60 lbs.
Tinned Vegetables	22 lbs.
Tinned Fruit	16½ lbs.
* Milk	10 pints
* Ice Cream (various)	3 gallons
* Fresh Fruit	15 lbs.
* Fresh Vegetables	72 lbs.
* Fresh Meat	34 lbs.
* Fresh and Frozen Fish	57 lbs.
* Frozen Food (miscellaneous)	59 lbs.

*These items were condemned following break-down in or loss of power to storage refrigerators.

Slaughter of Poultry Act

This Act which came into force on January 1st, 1970 requires that all poultry intended for human consumption, except in the case of Muslims and Jews, shall be slaughtered instantaneously by either decapitation or dislocation of the neck or other approved method of stunning.

Under the provisions of the Act, the local authority must maintain a register of such premises.

At the end of the year there were no such premises within the rural district.

Slaughter of Animals Act 1955

Five applications for renewal of licences to slaughter food animals under the requirements of section 3 of the Act, were received and granted.

OFFICES, SHOPS AND RAILWAYS PREMISES ACT 1963

The number of premises within the rural district registered under the provision of this legislation at the end of the year was 49. This was an increase of one over the number registered in the previous year and was the result of a new registration.

All such premises received a general inspection and in all a total of 87 visits were made for various purposes of the Act.

The following table is a copy of the information supplied to the Department of Employment via H.M. Inspector of Factories for the year ending 31st December, 1972.

Class of Premises	No. of premises registered during year	Total number of registered premises at end of year	No. of registered premises inspected during year
Offices	NIL	9	9
Retail Shops	1	28	28
Wholesale Shops and Warehouses	NIL	2	2
Catering Establishments & Canteens	NIL	9	9
Fuel Storage Depot	NIL	1	1
	1	49	49

ANALYSIS OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN REGISTERED PREMISES

<u>Class of Workplace</u>	<u>No. of Persons Employed</u>
Offices	33
Retail Shops	92
Wholesale Shops and Warehouses	2
Catering Establishments and Canteens	65
Fuel Storage Depots	1
Total	193
Total Males	59
Total Females	134

No applications for exemptions under the requirements of the Act were made in respect of space, temperature, sanitary conveniences or washing facilities.

Infringements of the Act were of a minor nature and were remedied without exception, by informal action.

ANIMALS BOARDING ESTABLISHMENTS ACT 1968

For the second year in succession, no applications for licences under the Act were received.

SCRAP METAL DEALERS ACT, 1964

Two applications for registration as Scrap Metal Dealers were received during the year and certificates issued bringing the total of registrations under the requirements of the Act to thirteen at the end of the year.

FACTORIES ACT, 1961

There was a total of 59 premises within the rural district registered under the requirements of the Factories Act, 1961.

Two of the premises so registered lacked mechanical power.

There were no recorded outworkers in the district.

<p>Summary of the number of premises registered under the Factories Act, 1961, in the rural district of ...</p>	
1961	59
1962	59
1963	59
1964	59
1965	59
1966	59
1967	59
1968	59
1969	59
1970	59
1971	59
1972	59
1973	59
1974	59
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2098	59
2099	59
2100	59

FACTORIES ACT 19611. Inspections

Premises	Number on Register	Number of		
		Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
(1) Factories in which Secs. 1,2,3,4,& 6 are to be enforced by the Local Authority	2	2	NIL	NIL
(2) Factories not includ- ed in (1) in which Sec. 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	41	41	NIL	NIL
(3) Other premises in which Sec. 7 is en- forced by the Local Authority (excluding outworkers' premises)	16	16	NIL	NIL
TOTAL	59	59	NIL	NIL

2. Defects Found

Particulars (1)	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecut- ions were instituted (6)
	Found (2)	Remedied (3)	Referred		
			To H.M. Inspec- tor (4)	By H.M. Inspect- or (5)	
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	1	1	-	-	NIL
Overcrowding (S.2)	NIL	-	-	-	-
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)	NIL	-	-	-	-
Inadequate ventilation(S.4)	NIL	-	-	-	-
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	NIL	-	-	-	-
Sanitary Conveniences(S.7)					
(a) Insufficient	NIL	-	-	-	-
(b) Unsuitable or defective	1	1	-	-	-
(c) Not separate for sexes	NIL	-	-	-	-
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork)	NIL	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	2	2	-	-	-

